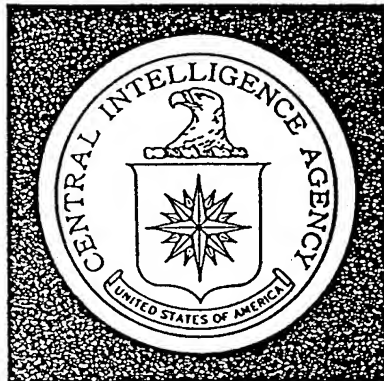


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# Intelligence Memorandum

*Anomalies in Soviet Shipping to North Vietnam  
During the First Half of 1969*

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Directorate of Intelligence  
July 1969

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Anomalies in Soviet Shipping  
to North Vietnam  
During the First Half of 1969

Summary

Recent anomalies in Soviet shipping to North Vietnam suggest that the USSR has expanded the categories of military-related cargo that it is willing to ship to North Vietnam by sea since the bombing halt. Soviet ships during the first half of 1969 delivered the first seaborne consignments to North Vietnam of Soviet Chief Engineering Directorate (GIU) cargo and ammunition, a large number of

and the first shiploads of vehicles to North Vietnam from the Soviet Far East. In contrast to previous practice, Soviet ships en route to Haiphong have stopped at intermediate ports to discharge military cargo without advance notice. Even though deliveries of military-related cargoes have become more frequent, there is no conclusive evidence of any seaborne deliveries to North Vietnam of combat arms or ammunition.

The GIU cargoes were shipped under contracts dealing with both aviation equipment and land armaments. Shipments by the GIU to other countries in these categories have included both combat materiel and military-related items. Soviet deliveries in the past to North Vietnam (by rail) and to Cuba were models designed for training or target competition. shipped by the USSR to the Middle East and Cuba have

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ranged from trucks to combat aircraft. The quantities involved in these suspicious shipments to North Vietnam were small. Even if every suspicious item were combat materiel, total deliveries of such cargo would be negligible compared with the amount of military aid which North Vietnam receives from the USSR.

The deliveries of vehicles from the Soviet Far East may have been diversions from rail shipment across China as a result of Chinese harassment. The presence of five 100-mm antiaircraft guns in the railyard near the wharves in Haiphong on 10 May 1969 suggests a diversion of combat materiel from rail to sea, but the mode of arrival of these guns in Haiphong has not been determined. Similar guns have been used in the Haiphong area for some time.

If Soviet shipments across China are being delayed or harassed, as some reports indicate, the USSR is likely to switch more military-related cargoes, and possibly some combat materiel, to sea shipment. Soviet authorities probably could conceal some shipments of combat materiel for a time, if they wished to do so. Repeated shipments by sea of large quantities of combat materiel, however, probably would be detected.

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Chief Engineering Directorate Cargo

1. During 1969 the first seaborne shipments of cargo by the USSR's Chief Engineering Directorate (GIU) to North Vietnam were detected. The first shipment arrived in Haiphong from the Black Sea on 15 April aboard the Soviet large-hatch ship *Partizanskaya Iskra*.<sup>\*</sup> This 39-ton cargo, which has not been identified,

2. The GIU is frequently involved in shipments of combat materiel and military support equipment such as trucks and radar to other countries, both by rail and by sea. It has also been involved in at least one rail shipment to North Vietnam. In 1966 a large-hatch ship, which eventually called at

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<sup>\*</sup> A dry cargo ship with at least one hatch 50 feet or more in length. This oversize hatch facilitates the handling of large items of cargo. Nearly all of the general cargo shipped to North Vietnam from the Black Sea is carried by ships of this type.

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North Vietnam, delivered GIU cargo to an intermediate port, Djakarta.\* In another instance, 3 tons of GIU cargo were shipped from North Vietnam to the USSR by sea. However, the GIU had never been previously identified, as the shipper of seaborne cargo to North Vietnam.

3. The voyage of the *Partizanskaya Iskra* was noteworthy in other respects. The ship passed the Bosphorus on 24 February declaring from Ilichevsk (near Odessa) to Singapore. Before calling at Singapore it called at Djakarta and Surabaya without advance notice, probably to discharge military cargo. Previous calls at intermediate ports by ships suspected of delivering military cargo had always been forecast. Moreover,

2,200 of 7,000 tons of cargo on board the *Partizanskaya Iskra* for Haiphong were unidentified.

4. The second detected seaborne shipment of GIU cargo to North Vietnam is aboard the *Partizanskaya Slava*, which should arrive in Haiphong in early July.

Much of the other cargo for Haiphong on the *Partizanskaya Slava* has been identified and consists of a variety of general cargo, including 100 motorcycles weighing 45 tons consigned to the

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\* The Baymak, which declared from Nikolayev to Djakarta, delivered aviation material to Djakarta. Later it called at Haiphong.

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There were also  
of 8 x 12 x 20 feet on the deck of the  
*Bratslav*; their contents have not been identified.  
The *Oktyabrskaya Revolyutsiya*,  
was supposed to deliver  
weighing 130 kg to Singapore with transshipment  
to be made to Djakarta. However, the ship is  
reported to have discharged in  
Haiphong.

8. The first and only seaborne shipment of  
to North Vietnam is aboard  
the *Berezovka*, which is scheduled to arrive in  
Haiphong about 1 July.

9. The munitions on these ships  
probably are what they purported to be

*Raznoeksport* (meaning "various exports"),  
which is subordinate to the Soviet Ministry of  
Foreign Trade and has dealt in the past with the  
export of tobacco products, building materials,  
mica, hides, hardware, insulators, firefighting  
equipment, leather goods, crockery, domestic elec-  
trical appliances, sewing machines, clothing,  
knitted goods, sports goods, sporting guns, matches,  
toys, musical instruments, and so on.

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One delivery of ammunition and firing pins was consigned to North Vietnam's quasi-military "Central Committee for Sports and Gymnastics." No deliveries of \_\_\_\_\_ were observed between September 1967 and early 1969.

10. Soviet shipments by sea of \_\_\_\_\_ and ammunition to other destinations are not unusual. There have been 13 such deliveries to Cuba since the beginning of 1967.\* Most of these were \_\_\_\_\_ and, where identified, turned out to be of 5.6 mm caliber. Most of the shipments were small. There is no evidence that any of them included combat weapons or ammunition.

#### Technical Cargo

11. Several of the Soviet arrivals in Haiphong during the first half of 1969 delivered \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ to Cuba and the UAR. The *Nizhneudinsk*, a 2 January arrival, carried nearly a full load of flour, some caustic soda, and 1 ton of \_\_\_\_\_

12. The *Oktyabrskaya Revolyutsiya* and the *Bratslav*, both discussed previously in connection with consignments of \_\_\_\_\_ also delivered \_\_\_\_\_ to Haiphong. The *Oktyabrskaya Revolyutsiya* is reported to have unloaded \_\_\_\_\_ at Haiphong.

13. On 1 April 1969 the *Ignatiy Sergeyev* declared at the Bosphorus for Haiphong from Nikolayev, the port of origin for many previous arms shipments.

\* There were deliveries by Soviet ships to Cuba prior to 1967. References to \_\_\_\_\_ or ammunition have not been made in connection with voyages of non-Soviet ships to Cuba.

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This was only the second ship to declare for Haiphong from this port. Ten tons of

were included in its cargo for North Vietnam. The ship made an unscheduled stop in Sihanoukville, Cambodia, on its way to Haiphong and probably offloaded military equipment under an aid agreement with Cambodia. A vehicle resembling a compressor-oxidizer truck, which is used with missile systems, was photographed on the deck of the *Ignatiy Sergeyev* when it passed the Bosphorus. When the ship was photographed again, seven days after its arrival at Zero Buoy in Haiphong, this vehicle was no longer on deck. Therefore, it had been unloaded at Sihanoukville (unlike-ly because the Cambodians have no missiles) or lightered off at Haiphong. The nature of the cargoes shipped to North Vietnam has not been determined, but there is a strong suspicion that they are at least military-related.

#### Suspicious Voyages in the Past

14. Six of the 10 ships discussed above have made suspicious voyages to North Vietnam in the past (three of the remaining four ships were on their first voyage to North Vietnam). The *Partizanskaya Iskra* delivered a cargo to North Vietnam in August 1967 that included 26 crates identified as resembling Styx missile crates, but no Styx missiles have ever been observed in North Vietnam. The nature of this suspicious cargo, however, has not been determined. The *Belgorod Dnestrovskiy* carried cargo to North Vietnam in February 1966 and February 1968. Moreover, it berthed at Haiphong five days before four 29-foot mansard-roof crates, similar to those used to transport military equipment, were photographed near the Haiphong wharves. In September 1968 it delivered 7,900 tons of cargo to Haiphong, 7,700 tons of which have not been identified.

15. The *Bratslav* arrived in Haiphong on with 3,500 tons out of 4,200 tons of its cargo unidentified, including 12 boxes of unspecified cargo shipped by Aviaeksport. In October 1968 it delivered 8,100 tons; 7,200 tons were unidentified. The *Oktyabrskaya Revolyutsiya* carried equipment to North Vietnam in

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May 1968. The *Nizhneudinsk* early in 1968 delivered three "assemblies," and "field kitchens" weighing a total of 37 tons and shipped by Prom-masheksport, which handles both commercial and military-related goods. The *Berezovka* delivered to Haiphong in July 1968. In January 1969 it offloaded 6,500 tons of cargo in Haiphong, 6,100 tons of which were unidentified.

Motor Vehicle Shipments from the Soviet Far East

16. In January 1969 the Soviet large-hatch ship *Vitim* delivered a shipload of vehicles to North Vietnam from Vladivostok.\* This was the first full shipload of vehicles carried to North Vietnam from the USSR since February 1966 and the first shipload from Soviet Pacific ports. In April and May 1969, there were three similar voyages, each with substantial cargoes of vehicles. The *Orekhov*, a 16 April arrival, delivered 1,065 tons of vehicles, including 218 trucks and 9 ambulances, from Vladivostok. The deck cargo consisted of 44 ZIL-157 trucks, 6 GAZ-66 trucks, and 16 dump trucks. The *Vysokogorsk*, on its first voyage to Haiphong, arrived on 26 April with 1,029 tons of cargo loaded at Nakhodka, including 111 ZIL-157 trucks, 32 ZIL-MMZ-555 trucks, 2 GAZ-66 trucks, and 64 TAG-53A trucks. On deck were 44 trucks and 6 double-decker buses. The *Vysokogorsk* again arrived in Haiphong on 20 May, this time from Vladivostok, carrying at least 553 tons of trucks, 8 trailers, 2 buses, 7 unspecified vehicles, and small amounts of transformers, vodka, flour, and cheese. All three voyages were accorded priority handling in Haiphong. Each ship was unloaded in less than four days.

\* The *Vitim* was only the fourth large-hatch ship to sail to North Vietnam from the Soviet Far East. The first voyage was made by the *Ostrogozhsk*, a July 1966 arrival, which delivered 977 tons of cargo loaded at Sovetskaya Gavan and Vladivostok, none of which has been identified. The *Omsk*, a September 1967 arrival, delivered four 47-ton "heavyweights" which had been loaded in Vladivostok and which were never identified. The *Votkinsk*, a January 1968 arrival, delivered only 216 tons of cargo, including "field kitchens."

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17. The vehicles delivered from the Soviet Far East may originally have been intended for rail shipment through China, only to be diverted because of Chinese harassment. According to a Soviet radio broadcast of 27 April 1969 the Chinese at the end of 1968 delayed a Soviet freight train loaded with motor vehicles for North Vietnam at the Sino-Soviet border for three months. A Soviet official in Peking reported in late May that the Chinese continually harassed and delayed Soviet rail shipments to North Vietnam and that this harassment had continued up to late May 1969. He stated that there had been no noticeable increase in harassment, however, as a result of the initial Ussuri River incident. A Haiphong port official claimed in March or early April that Soviet supplies were being stopped by the Chinese, but that henceforth these supplies would come by ship. However, that Soviet rail shipments across China are continuing.

#### Antiaircraft Guns in Haiphong

18. Photography of Haiphong on 10 May 1969 showed antiaircraft guns (probably 100 mm) on flatcars in the main railyard four-fifths of a mile south of the main wharf area. Antiaircraft guns of this size have been emplaced in the Haiphong area for some time. Goods on other cars in the yard appeared to have arrived by sea, but it has not been determined how the guns arrived or whether they were incoming or outgoing cargo. If they were delivered by sea, the most likely vessels to have carried them were the *Partizanskaya Iskra* and the *Bratslav* (discussed previously) and the *Pavlovsk*, which arrived on 27 April 1969. Each ship offloaded cargo immediately preceding or during the time the antiaircraft guns were photographed. The *Pavlovsk* was the first large-hatch ship to sail directly to Haiphong from the Black Sea since August 1968. Of its 6,700 tons of cargo carried for North Vietnam, 5,700 tons has not been identified.

19. The *Pavlovsk* also was one of the first large-hatch ships to depart from a Black Sea port subsequent to the outbreak of the Ussuri River hostilities. It left the Black Sea approximately on 15 March -- 13 days after the initial Ussuri River incident, about enough time for the USSR to begin rerouting rail shipments destined for Vietnam.

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However, no direct evidence connects any of these vessels with the delivery of antiaircraft guns to North Vietnam.

Conclusions

20. The various anomalies noted in the past six months suggest an expansion in the categories of military-related cargoes the USSR has been willing to ship by sea to North Vietnam since the bombing halt, but they do not constitute conclusive evidence of seaborne shipments of combat arms and ammunition. In any event, the volumes involved are small. Even if every unidentified and suspicious item were combat arms or ammunition, total deliveries of such cargo would be negligible compared to the entire amount of military aid which North Vietnam receives from the USSR.

21. This apparent change in Soviet policy may represent a diversion of cargoes from rail shipment across China because of the threat of Chinese harassment. If the Chinese continue to delay and harass Soviet rail shipments, as some sources report, the USSR may ship more military-related cargoes, and possibly some combat materiel, by sea to North Vietnam. The USSR could conceal shipments of combat materiel for a time if it wished to do so.

Combat materiel delivered to North Vietnam by sea, however, presumably would be shipped together with commercial cargoes.

22. Detection of such cargoes would be difficult. Security at Soviet loading ports is excellent;

and photography of Haiphong has been sharply reduced since the bombing halt. Even though the advantages of concealment appear to be with the USSR, repeated sea shipments to North Vietnam of large quantities of combat materiel probably would be detected.

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